

Open Burning

Open fires cause air pollution. The resulting smoke and odors contain potentially harmful contaminants and can aggravate respiratory conditions, reduce visibility and generally lessen the enjoyment of property. There are alternatives to burning leaves, trash and other materials in the open.

First of all, you should try to recycle, reuse or reduce as much waste as possible. If these alternatives prove impossible, composting or burying garbage, setting it out for municipal collection or taking it directly to a local sanitary landfill site are other ways to avoid open burning.

However, if you must burn, follow these guidelines to keep your fire from being an air pollution problem:

- Burn only dry materials. Don't burn petroleum products, plastics, rubber or anything else that will cause excessive smoke or fumes.
- Keep fire at least 150 metres from a dwelling.
- Burn less than a cubic metre at a time.
- Stay with the fire at all times until completely extinguished.
- Check any local bylaws enforced by your fire or police department. If burning above Ontario's fire line, follow regulations enforced by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The fire line runs east from Lake Huron across the bottom of Georgian Bay and the top of Lake Simcoe down to Gananoque, then north to meet the Ottawa River north of Renfrew.

- Do not burn in urban or suburban areas. The harmful effects of the smoke and odors can be intensified by a buildup of pollutants in the air.

Do not burn on days when:

- Your area has a high Air Quality Index.
- Rain or fog are present, since smoke cannot disperse properly and may concentrate in an area.
- Wind speeds are high or wind directions are frequently changing because these conditions allow fires to spread rapidly.

All air pollution complaints received by the Ministry of Environment and Energy are investigated and corrective action can be taken under the Environmental Protection Act.

Further information about open burning is available from the nearest district office of the Ministry of Environment and Energy or the following regional offices:

Northern Ontario Region - 435 James St. S.,
Thunder Bay (807) 475-1205

Mid Ontario Region - 199 Larch St., Sudbury
(705) 675-4501

Eastern Region - 133 Dalton Ave., Kingston
(613) 549-4000

Central Region - 5775 Yonge St., North York
(416) 326-6700

West Central Region - 119 King St. W., Hamilton
(905) 521-7652

Southwest Region - 985 Adelaide St. S., London
(519) 661-2200

